

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

Please amend the claims in the subject patent application as follows:

1. (currently amended) A rubber composition comprising: (1) a rubbery polymer; and (2) from 1 ~~phr~~ to 30 ~~phr~~ parts per hundred parts of rubber by weight of pre-crosslinked polymer particles, wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer particles have a particle size which is within the range of 30 nm to 500 nm, wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is comprised of repeat units that are derived from at least one monomer selected from the group consisting of acrylate monomers, ~~vinyl aromatic monomers~~, acrylonitrile monomers, and vinyl halide monomers, wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is in the form of core-shell particles having a core and a shell; and wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer has a glass transition temperature which is within the range of 30°C to 200°C; and (3) 10 to 150 parts per hundred parts of rubber by weight of a filler selected from the group consisting of carbon black and silica.

2. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is further comprised of repeat units that are derived from a crosslinking monomer.

3. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 2 wherein the crosslinking monomer is incorporated into the pre-crosslinked polymer at a level which is within the range of 1 weight percent to 30 weight percent, based upon the total monomers incorporated into the pre-crosslinked polymer.

4. (currently amended) A rubber composition as specified in claim 3 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is present in the rubber composition at a level which is within the range of 2 ~~phr~~ to 20 ~~phr~~ parts per hundred parts of rubber by weight.

5. (currently amended) A rubber composition as specified in claim 3 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is present in the rubber composition at a level which is within the range

of 4 ~~phr~~ to 15 ~~phr~~ parts per hundred parts of rubber by weight.

6. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 4 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is in the form of particles having a particle size which is within the range of 40 nm to 250 nm.

7. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 5 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is in the form of particles having a particle size which is within the range of 100 nm to 200 nm; and wherein the monomer is acrylonitrile.

8. (canceled)

9. (canceled)

10. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 8 wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is in the form of particles that are essentially spherical in shape; and wherein the pre-crosslinked polymer is further comprised of repeat units that are derived from a conjugated diolefin monomer.

11. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the monomer is an acrylate monomer.

12. (canceled)

13. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the monomer is a vinyl halide monomer.

14. (canceled)

15. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 2 wherein the crosslinking monomer is selected from the group consisting of divinyl benzene and ethylene glycol dimethacrylate.

16. (canceled)

17. (original) A rubber composition as specified in ~~claim 16~~ claim 1 wherein the polymer in the core is crosslinked.

18. (original) A rubber composition as specified in ~~claim 16~~ claim 1 wherein the polymer in the shell is crosslinked.

19. (original) A rubber composition as specified in claim 11 wherein the acrylate monomer is methyl methacrylate.

20. (canceled)

21. (new) A rubber composition as specified in claim 1 wherein the filler is silica, and wherein the rubber composition is further comprised of a silica coupling agent.